

# ANDREW J. BROWN ACADEMY

## 2009-2010 Performance Analysis

*Core Question 4: Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?*

4.1. Does the school have a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?	
STANDARD	The school: a) curriculum aligns with the state standards; b) conducts systematic reviews of its curriculum to identify gaps based on student performance; c) the school regularly reviews scope and sequence to ensure presentation of content in time for testing; d) has a sequence of topics across grade levels and content areas that is prioritized and focuses on the core learning objectives; e) the staff understands and uniformly uses curriculum documents and related program materials to effectively deliver instruction; f) programs and materials are available to deliver the curriculum effectively.

### 2009-10 Performance: Meets Standard

As a National Heritage Academy school, AJB receives the NHA national curriculum and supporting materials. The curriculum is aligned with Indiana Academic Standards and AJB staff regularly review the curriculum to identify potential gaps related to state standards. Classroom observations reveal that the majority of teachers used the identified curriculum and that specific Indiana standards were posted in the classrooms. AJB's curriculum is effective, individual teachers supplement the curriculum as needed, and teachers are satisfied with the curriculum. Confidential surveys administered in 2009 revealed that 92% of teachers and 89% of parents are satisfied with the curriculum/academic program at AJB.

4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?	
STANDARD	The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) the curriculum is implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery possesses the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities possess variety and/or use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) supplies sufficient feedback to staff on instructional practices.

### 2009-10 Performance: Meets Standard

The school's rigorous curriculum is being implemented according to its design and is focused on core learning objectives. A variety of instructional activities are being employed and AJB supplies sufficient feedback to staff on instructional practices. The school has implemented a streamlined and consistent system for evaluating teacher performance and providing feedback related to instruction. Additionally, the school has increased the number of professional development opportunities offered to teachers in an effort to continue strengthening teaching methods.

4.3. For secondary students, does the school provide sufficient guidance on and support preparation for post-secondary options?	
<b>STANDARD</b>	The school: a) has challenging coursework (e.g., Advanced Placement courses, internships, independent study) to prepare students for rigorous post-secondary opportunities; b) has high expectations to motivate and prepare students for post-secondary academic opportunities; c) has sufficient material resources and personnel guidance available to inform students of post-secondary options; d) presents opportunities for extracurricular engagement and activities (e.g., athletics, academic clubs, vocational) to increase post-secondary options; e) meets or exceeds Indiana Core 40 graduation standard requirements.

**Not Applicable.** This sub-question is not applicable to Andrew J. Brown Academy, as the school does not serve high school students.

4.4. Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?	
<b>STANDARD</b>	The school: a) standardized and/or classroom assessments are accurate and useful measures of established learning standards/objectives; b) assessment results are received by classroom teachers in a timely and useful manner to influence instructional decisions; c) assessments have sufficient variety to guide instruction for a wide range of student learning abilities; d) there is sufficient frequency or use of assessments to inform instructional decisions effectively; e) assessment results are used to guide instruction or make adjustments to curriculum.

2009-10 Performance: **Meets Standard**

Andrew J. Brown Academy effectively uses learning standards and assessments to evaluate students and inform and improve instruction. The school has an abundance of information on student performance derived from a variety of standardized tests and formative assessments administered throughout the school year. Teachers utilize assessments to guide and make adjustments to instruction.

4.5. Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?	
<b>STANDARD</b>	The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) hiring processes are organized and used to support the success of new staff members; b) the school deploys sufficient number of faculty and staff to maximize instructional time and capacity; c) faculty and staff are certified/trained in areas to which they are assigned; d) professional development (PD) is related to demonstrated needs for instructional improvement; e) PD opportunities are determined through analyses of student attainment and improvement; f) the teacher evaluation plan is explicit and regularly implemented with a clear process and criteria.

2009-10 Performance: **Meets Standard**

Andrew J. Brown Academy has deployed a sufficient number of staff and faculty are certified/trained in the areas assigned. Professional development offerings are related to demonstrated needs for improvement and are based on analysis of student attainment and improvement. A number of improvements have been made at AJB, including a more clear and

consistent evaluation process, the creation of a teacher leadership team, the development of a school-wide discipline process, grade level team meetings, and the addition of administrators to support teachers.

At the time of AJB's Fifth Year Site Visit, concerns existed regarding the lack of leave and/or the process related to taking leave, confusion about how bonuses were allocated, and what teachers described as a lack of transparency between teachers and administrators. Additionally, the school's summer orientation was deemed helpful for staff hired prior to the beginning of the school year, but no orientation process existed for staff who were hired during the school year. In their application for charter renewal, AJB addressed the issues of hiring, professional development and teacher evaluation, citing a number of programmatic improvements that have been made in the subsequent years. The school is now being supported by the Talent Acquisition Team at National Heritage Academies who assist with recruiting talented new staff to AJB. The NHA team works directly with the AJB principal to identify and screen candidates for open positions. NHA widely markets openings, recruits candidates, performs background checks, and refers top contenders to the principal to conduct interviews. The AJB principal and leadership team interview candidates and the determination is made by the principal. This system is meant to increase the pool of talented candidates and allow the principal to focus on interviews.

Staff members now participate in 50 hours of continuous professional development throughout the school year, related to improving instructional practices and classroom management, and driven by identified student and teacher needs. The school also streamlined and clarified the process for teacher evaluation and included samples of classroom observation forms with the renewal application.

<b>4.6. Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?</b>	
<b>STANDARD</b>	<b>The school: a) has a mission that is shared by all stakeholders; b) has stakeholders possessing widespread knowledge and commitment to the intentions of the school's mission.</b>

2009-10 Performance: **Meets Standard**

The mission of Andrew J. Brown Academy is widely and clearly understood by all stakeholders. Interviews and focus groups with Andrew J. Brown Academy staff indicate school-wide awareness of the mission and the core values of the school.

<b>4.7. Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?</b>	
<b>STANDARD</b>	<b>The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) the school has clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach possesses high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are respectful and supportive and faculty and students are clear about processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are professional and constructive.</b>

2009-10 Performance: **Meets Standard**

In its fifth year, AJB was found to have developed an effective classroom-level discipline policy. The majority of teachers stated however that the discipline policy became ineffective once students were sent to the office. Teachers reported a lack of consistency in consequences and discipline by the administration level. Many teachers noted that students enjoyed being sent to the office and viewed going to office as a reward. In the school's application for charter renewal, the discipline policy and processes were described and clearly indicate that further improvements have been made since the fifth year site visit. Grade level teachers now meet several times a week to discuss classroom management and discipline. Teachers receive an increased amount of classroom management training and students with more serious discipline issues are matched with more experienced classroom teachers. The school has retained the services of a consultant considered to be a national expert in student discipline, who visited the school on a number of occasions and worked directly with staff to improve classroom management skills. Consequences for misbehavior at the middle school level are now more stringent and appear to be more consistently applied. Additionally, the school has simplified the process for sending students to the office, allowing paperwork to be tabled in serious cases. The school did not address in its application how discipline is addressed once students are sent to the office, however.

In an effort to improve the relationship between faculty and the administration, the school has implemented a number of initiatives over the past two years including the establishment of a Morale Committee, improved channels of communication, staff luncheons, and regular staff recognition.

<b>4.8. Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful?</b>	
<b>STANDARD</b>	<b>The school: a) has active and ongoing communication between the school and parents; b) utilizes communications that are both timely and relevant to the parental concerns; c) communicates student academic progress and achievement in reports that are understood by parents; d) the school's communication methods are designed to meet the needs of a diverse set of parents (e.g., communicating in parents' native languages, not communicating only in writing when many parents cannot read, holding meetings at convenient times for parents).</b>

2009-10 Performance: **Meets Standard**

At AJB, communication between the school, parents and students is active, timely, relevant and considers diverse needs. Parents fully understand the reports produced by the school and report satisfaction with the quality and frequency of school communication. Student performance reports are clear, concise, and easily understood.